Numb. 5680

The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

From Tuesday September 23. to Saturday September 27. 1718.

Escurial, September 11.

ON the 8th of Auguſt towards Night the Engliſh Squadron appeared at the Iſland of Stromboli; and the Marqueſs de Lede having the next Day ſent an Officer of the Marine on board Admiral Byng who was at Anchor at Cape Mortelli, to learn the Motive of his coming, he anſwered to that Inquiry, that he had written a Letter and appointed a Perſon to carry it, and that he came only as a Friend and Mediator of Peace.

The Letter was delivered into the Hands of the Marqueſs de Lede, and was in the ſame Terms as that which he wrote near Cadiz, and which was delivered to the King by Mr. Stanhope, notifying his Arrival, and his Maſter's Orders to employ Force of Arms, in caſe his Majeſty did not deſiſt from his Enterprizes on Italy: Only in this laſt Letter written to the Marqueſs de Lede there was this Variation, that inſtead of naming the Dominions of the Archduke, he mentioned the Kingdom of Sicily as a Part comprehended in the Neutrality of Italy. The Perſon who in the Name of Admiral Byng conferred with the Marqueſs de Lede, made very preſſing Inſtances that all Operations of War might immediately ceaſe, and a Suſpenſion of Arms be ſpeedily concluded. And it being anſwered on our Part, that this could not be done without having the neceſſary Orders firſt from Court, the Engliſhman was diſmiſſed to return on board; but before he went, the Marqueſs de Lede reproached him with the convoying of 14 Tartans having German Infantry in them from Naples; this he excuſed, ſaying that thoſe Tartans were met near the Coaſt of Sicily, and that his Chief had judged it would not be proper to hinder their Paſſage, ſeeing they were bound for Bijoles in Calabria, whither indeed they actually went; on this Occaſion he confirmed, that his General was not come to declare War, but only as a Mediator of Peace, and that he would not commit any Hoſtility.

Admiral Byng being told the Anſwer and Sentiments of the Marqueſs de Lede, ſent the Conſul of his Nation reſiding in Meſſina, to acquaint the Marqueſs, that within eight Days he would return with his Squadron into that Neighbourhood, and then he hoped they ſhould eat a Soup together, ſeeing by that Time the Marqueſs might receive Orders for an intire Concluſion of Peace.

On the 10th he entred the Faro with his whole Squadron, ſtanding to the Southward, our Fleet being gone the ſame Courſe before: He held on his Way till he came into the Height of Syracuſa, and on the 11th coming up with the Rear-guard of the Marqueſs Mari, he committed downright Hoſtility and all the Actions of open War. And though the King cannot perſwade himſelf that this Proceeding (in which Breach of Faith has ſo great a Share) is the Act of the Engliſh Nation, yet no Body is ignorant that it is the Effect of the artful Projects of the Miniſtry at London, who are capable of attempting the greateſt Wickedneſs, to bring about their Deſigns, which are no leſs pernicious than fatal to the common Liberty.

As our Naval Forces were divided into five Squadrons; and as by our Advices it does not yet appear, that after what paſſed with the Squadron of the Marqueſs Mari, the other four (including that which before went to Malta, and 'tis ſaid was returned) commanded by the Chiefs Caſtagneta, Chacon, Guevarra, and Cammock, engaged with the Engliſh; as likewiſe on the 12th both Fleets were out of Sight of Sicily; we know not yet what has befallen either of them ſince.

Extract from Sir George Byng's Letter to Collonel Stanhope, to be by him communicated to the Court of Spain, dated the 20th of June, O. S. from on board the Barfleur, off the Coaſt of Spain.

I deſire you will give me leave by you to acquaint his Catholick Majeſty, of my Arrival with the Fleet in the Mediterranean, and that I am inſtructed, in the King my Maſter's Name, to promote all Meaſures that may contribute to the compoſing all Differences that have ariſen between his Catholick Majeſty and the Emperour.

But if his Catholick Majeſty ſhall not pleaſe to accept of the Mediation of our Maſter, nor his Friendly Offices, but continues in the Reſolution that his Troops ſhall attack the Emperour's Territories in Italy, I muſt then acquaint you, Sir, that in that Caſe, I am commanded by the King our Maſter, to uſe all the Power of his Fleet, and Forces with me, to maintain (as much as is poſſible for me to do) the Neutrality of Italy, and defend the Emperour's Territories therein, by oppoſing all Force that ſhall endeavour to attack him in his Dominions there.

Extract from Sir George Byng's Letter to the Marqueſs de Lede, dated from on board the Barfleur, near the Faro of Meſſina, the 29th of July, O. S.

His Catholick Majeſty the King of Spain making warlike Preparations for attacking Italy, and having already actually ſeized on part of Sicily, without any War declared againſt that Kingdom,——— the Conſequence of which may be followed with further Deſigns to invade the Kingdom of Naples.

——I ſend this Gentleman, Mr. Saunders, who is my firſt Captain, to wait upon your Excellency with the Tenders of my beſt Offices, for promoting the Meaſures that may be advanced for ſettling Peace in this Part of Europe. If they ſhall be accepted on the Part of Spain, my Endeavours ſhall be likewiſe uſed with the Viceroy of Naples, and the other Generals, and Miniſters of the Emperour in Italy, for compoſing the Differences that have ariſen.

A Suſpenſion of Arms, and Forbearance of all Acts of Hoſtilities on all Sides being abſolutely neceſſary for ſetting on foot proper Negotiations of Peace; I do, in my Maſter's Name, propoſe to your Excellency that there be an immediate Ceſſation of Arms, and a Forbearance of all Acts of Hoſtilities on all Sides, for the Space of Two Months,